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ABSTRACT

Higher education and its impact during times of societal changes is addressed within the context of studying student behavior and the institution's adaptation to new social issues. To help do this, an institution of higher education needs an assessment of the socio-psychological makeup of university students, their personalities, their longitudinal change and development during their university years, their value systems, and their subcultures, within the context of societal changes. The Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) results in a profile on 14 scales, all within the realm of normality, and is useful for psychologically describing individuals and subgroups in terms of attitudes, values, and interests particularly relevant to the socio-psychological and intellectual ego-functioning of university students. Six studies have used the OPI to analyze different youth subgroups involved in social changes of the past. Higher education is often the intermediary, the go-between, during times of social change when value systems are coming into question. How higher education addresses these issues can effect the future direction of social systems, society itself, and even internationalism. If higher education cannot encourage and accommodate innovation, this inability inevitably will lead to stagnant conditions on and off the campus. Contains 15 references. (GLR)

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Higher Education and Societal Change: The Vanguard Personality Syndrome of University Students

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It is an honour as President of the Pacific Region Association for Higher Education to address the opening plenary session as we begin our conference on the theme "Higher Education and the Asia-Pacific Century." It is also an honour and pleasure to us all that our Association is meeting for the first time in Seoul and that Dr. Park of the Republic of Korea is President-Elect. May I also take this moment to thank formally, on behalf of the whole Association, all those who have taken the various responsibilities and given of their time and effort to mount this conference. We greatly appreciate their commitment.

1. Sociological Background

In 1981, the President of Korea recognized the "Great Pacific Age" and suggested the creation of a Pan-Pacific community to enhance multilateral communication and cooperation (Chun, 1988). The PRAHE has concomitant goals. But as Chun further states that, in general, with obvious exceptions, neither Korean professors and teachers nor students and citizens are always well informed about all the Pacific Rim countries—and this relative lack of knowledge about each other is equally and mutually true on the part of those other countries, too—this non-understanding and misunderstanding remains the basic challenge of the ongoing thrust of internationalism as a philosophy and as a policy, of foreign student education as an experience, and of global education as a social studies curriculum at all educational levels.

Information, or knowledge (which has a more enlightened, experiential, perceptive connotation) is fundamental. A substantial international outlook is obtained when individuals attain a particular Weltanschanung, via a complex, idiosyncratic system of formal and informal learning, that heightens their awareness of the interconnectedness of peoples and countries physically, socially, economically, politically and ethically and how local decisions and actions may have repercussions, direct and indirect, expected and unexpected, known and unknown, on other people in other places. Such an outlook necessitates and education that not only imparts the relevant information but also enhances the intuitive and emotional components to deal with the moral issues of our time. The three C's of this international viewpoint have been stated, firstly and secondly, as the aforementioned Communication and Cooperation and, thirdly, Conflict Resolution—each successively more difficult to do whether at the personal, psychological level between individual personalities or all the way up at the level of international relations between countries.

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The dramatic changes that have been occuring recently in many pacific region societies in a relatively brief span of historic time has led to unparalled socio-economic readjustments, both within such countries as well as between countries, as they react to the new economic order and the changing relationships. Industrialization has been rapidly evolving and highly technical, post-industrial trends are arising where the ability to process and deal with complex information is paramount, the so called information society. These accelerating changes have had a differing, mixed effect on specific individuals, families, subgroups, cities and countries and their interrelationships. Changing living patterns and qualities of life, although often positive in certain aspects, have also been accompanied by personal frustrations, social tensions, environmental stresses, competing and conflicting pressure groups, policy struggles, political crises, and international differences.

The future years are going to require us all to modify our belief systems and adjust to the range of further changes that ultimately are coming as we approach the uncertainties of the 21st century. Social change is inevitable. What direction it will take is uncertain. Futurists offer differing scenarios for the distant future. The projection to the nearer, more foreseeable future perhaps can best be estimated by an analysis of clues of the past and present conditions and stresses, the value system of the vanguard, and the resulting evolutionary zeitgeist. Whatever the clues and trends that arise, a society's educational system will be involved in social change as part of the problem and/or the solution.

2. Role of Higher Education

Institutions of higher education, striving for excellence in order to fulfill their mandate, assume specific underlying policies including the quest for superior students, procuring an optimum learning environment, and the cultivation of diversity. Universities, however, are placed in various dilemmas as they face the reconciliation of the multiple roles of conservator of the society's history and cultural traditions, resolver of contemporary social needs, and innovator of new ideas and approaches to anticipate the future societal change. The American campus, for example, has undergone significant educational adjustment, reform and experimentation in the recent past as a response to the forces of social change and this modification has been fully documented and examined by the extensive survey of Grant and Riesman(1978).

Historically, society's relationship with higher education has continually fluctuated as the very situational relationship is ripe with the potential not only for cooperation and common interests but also for conflict and differences in value systems. For example, the problem of university autonomy and government policy is a classic balancing act that societies, over the centuries and in the present day, have experienced with varying out-comes. The universal commonalities within the world fraternity of institutions of higher education enables us to recognize well the basic predicaments, if not the subtleties, faced by specific universities and countries at particular times. It is an occupational hazard of our profession and a continual struggle.

3. Socio-psychological Perspective

As a psychologist in higher education I have specialized for the last 25 years in the socio-psychological study of university students—surely the raison d'etre of higher education—their personalities, their longitudinal change and development during their university years, their value systems, and their subcultures, often, necessarily, within the context of social change. Although much of my research focuses on North American university students, there are likely numerous general factors and dynamics that are similarly involved. And similar conclusions can be drawn, either regardless of or within the context of, the specificity of a particular society or Zeitigeist. The commonalities of the human personlity and the human condition are overridingly universal. And university students the world over, that special biased sample of youth, that particular time in their young adulthood, and that unique milieu with its pressures and stimulations within which students exist, have a unique universality that we all have experienced and continue to sense.

Personally, as a product of the undergraduate years of the 1950's, the "Quiet Generation" at the University of British Columbia at Vancouver, I suddenly found myself in the 1960's at the University of California at Berkeley as a foreign doctoral student, a time and place of particularly radical social innovation and political dissidence. This changed "temper of the times" was especially focal to social scientists interested in the dynamics of such important phenomena within the student subcultures. The status quo was under sttack on many levels. It was eady and it was the beginning of my formal research involvement and of my general area of specialization decision.

4. Psychology and the FSM

Watta and Whittaker (1966) studied the politically dissident, idealistic, anti-war, student Free Speech Movement (FSM) on the Berkeley campus during its actual historic takeover of the University's administration building and which eventually led to the largest mass arrest, seven hundred and seventy-three individuals, mostly students, in American history up to that time. On an instrument designed to measure, among other variables, the dichotomized personality dimension of Rigidity-Flexibility, the FSM samples were significantly more flexible than a comparative sample of U.C. students-in-general, i.e., they could mobilize greater freedom of reaction, rather than behave with cautious guardedness, and in the extreme they could lack even defensive caution. Adjectives descriptive of this flexible personality, as contrasted to the rigid, include : active, adaptable, adventurous, aggressive, argumentative, assertive, confident, demanding, egotistic, energetic, fluent, idealistic, independent, impulsive, informed, irritable, liberal, organized, outspoken, progressive, quick, rebellious, resourceful, self-centered, spontaneous, talkative, unconventional and uninhibited. Furthermore, flexibility is negatively related to conformity, ethnocentricity and authoritarianism.

From a socio-psychological point of view, the assessment of attitudes and beliefs is fundamental in order to understand persons, institutions, subcultures or societies. These value systems are especially important to consider in times of both personal and societal tensions and to ascertain the influence of interactive variables. At the level of the individual,

personality is the central, descriptive, motivational and explanatory factor and subsumed under this rubric is one's value system, cognitively and opertionally. The availability of reliable and valid measures of such personality attributes is a central research concern of psychologists.

5. Six OPI Studies of Students

The Omnibus Personality Inventory, Form F (Heist & Yonge, 1971) was developed and revised at the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California at Berkeley, during the 1950's and 1960's, and where I spent a five year post-doctoral. Evolved within the general framework of personality theory, the OPI is a non-clinical insturment especially constructed to assess attitudes, values and interests particularly relevant to the socio-psychological and intellectual ego-functioning of university students and normed on students-in-general. The OPI generates a profile on fourteen scales, all within the realm of normality, useful for psychologically describing individuals and subgroups and their intercomparisons. These variables are briefly described in Table. 1.

Table 1. Brief Description of the 14 Scales of the Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) Form F:

(TI) Thinking Introversion: Persons scoring high like reflective though and activties. They express interests in a broad range of ideas in a variety of areas, such as literature, art and philosophy. Their thinking is less influenced by generally accepted ideas than that of lower-scoring thinking extroverts who show a preference for overt action and tend to evaluate ideas on their practical, immediate application.

(TO) Theoretical Orientation: This measures an interest in a more restricted range of ideas than is true of TI. High scorers are intersted in science and a preference for using the scientific method in thinking. They are Logical, analytical and critical towards problems.

(Es) Estheticism: Highs endorse a diverse appreciation of artistic matters and activities. The focus of their interests tends to extend beyond painting, sculpture and music and includes literature and dramatics.

(Co) Complexity: This reflects an experimental orientation rather than a fixed way of viewing phenomena. Highs are tolerant of ambiguities and uncertainties, are fond of novel situations and ideas, very much prefer diversity, and are disposed to seek out and enjoy such experiences.

(Au) Autonomy: The characteristic measured is composed of non-authoritarian attitudes and a need for independence. Highs are independent of authority as traditionally imposed through social institutions. They tend to be realistic, tolerant, and intellectually liberal.

(RO) Religious Orientation: Highs tend to be skeptical of traditional religious beliefs and practices, especially the very orthodox or fundamentalistic. Persons scoring adove the mean manifest a liberal view of religious beliefs and lows tend to be skeptical of contrasting viewpoints.

(SE) Social Extroversion : This reflects a preferred style of relating to people in a social context. Highs display a strong interest in being with people, and seek and gain satisfacton from social actives. The lower social introverts need more privacy and tend to find social interaction less fulfilling.

(IE) Impulse Expression : This assesses a general readiness to express impulses in conscious thought or in overt action. Highs have an active imgination, value sensual reactions, and their thinking and behaviour have overtones of feeling and fantasies.

(PI) Personal Integration : The highs experience few attitudes or situations that characterize the socially self-critical. Lows are aware of their self-perceived, asocial tendenies and express feelings of solitude.

(AL) Anxiety Level : Highs have few feelings of anxiety nor are they nervous or worried. Lows respond that the, feel tense and high-strung and experience tension in their social environment.

(Am) Altruism : Highs are affiliative persons and trusting in their relations with others. They exhibit concern for feelings and welfare of people. Lows are less concerned about others and view people from a more objective perspective.

(PO) Practical Outlook : Highs are intersted in practical, applied activities and value concrete accomplishments. The criterion they most use to evaluate ideas and things is immediate utility.

(MF) Masculinity—Femininity : This assesses some of the traditional, conventional differences in attitudes and interests beween men and women. Highs (masculine direction) deny interests in esthetics and admit to few personal problems or feelings of anxiety. They tend to be less socially inclined and more interested in scientific matters. Lows (feminine direction), besides stronger esthetic and social inclinations, admit to greater sensitivity and emotionality.

(RB) Response Bias : This represents an approach to assess the inventory-taking attitude. Very high scorers may be responding similar to persons who were explicitly asked to "make a good impression" by their specific responses.

The following six research studies that will be discussed use this instrument and relate their seminal findings to a psychologically consistent syndrome associated with subgroups involved with social change (Whittaker, 1987a). Their profiles are illustrated in Figure 1 in standard T-score format(where the norm mean is 50 and the standard deviation is 10).

Heist (1966) notad that highly committed university student political activists, those same FSM students previously studied by Watts and Whittaker and measured sometime after their release from arrest (and whose idealistic protests eventually led to needed social change), generated a consistent, highly unique, mean group profile on the OPI compared to students-in-general. This pattern or scores consisted of three prominent characteristics : (a) an intellectual disposition syndrome with Thinking Introversion and Estheticism scales relatively higher than Theoretical Orientation, and Complexity highest of all, forming what is now called the unique "J-curve", (b) a non-anthorization syndrome with very high Autonomy and high Religious Orientation (liberal rather than orthodox direction) ; and

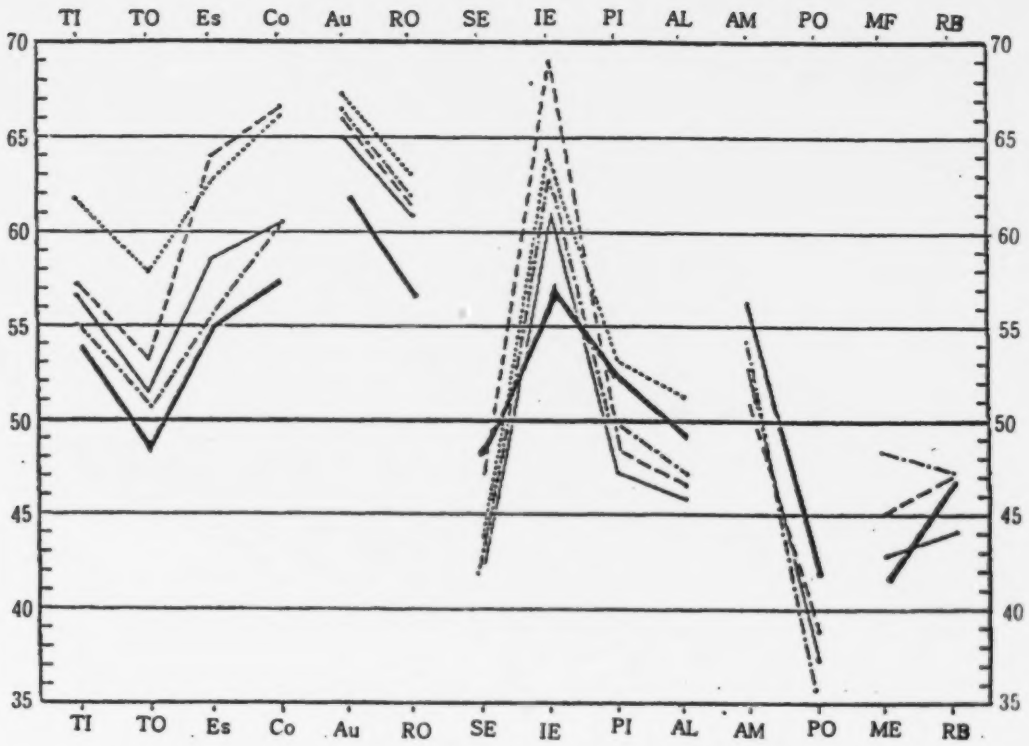

Figure 1. Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) Form F Mean Group Profiles of Five Different Youth Subgroups Involed In Social Change.

..... Free Speech Movement Students (Heist, 1966).
– – – – – Counter–Culture Nonstudents (Whittaker & Watts, 1969).
——— Women's Liberation Movement Students (Whittaker & Elias, 1976).
——— Community Education Program Students (Whittaker, 1985a).
—·—·—·— Socio–Political Vanguard Students (Whittaker, 1987b).

(c) a socio-emotional adjustment syndrome with very high Impulse Expression and comparatively lower but moderate Social "Introversion," Personal Integration and Anxiety Level. (The remaining four scales, basically unrelated and therefore not to be considered as syndromatic, had not been finalized at that time and therefore were not administered.)

Interestingly, this very same OPI group profile, again significantly unlike a sample of comparative students-in-general, was obtained by Whittaker and Watts (1969) in a second study from another, contemporary, different, social change movement: disaffiliate, non-conformist university-dropouts who were members of the vanguard countor-culture (and whose values also were destined to modify social mores). This subculture, rejecting the traditional, tended to withdraw from conventional rigid society whereas the political acti-

vist subculture confronted this same society from within to force change. Now four further prominent characteristics were noted with the use of a revised version of the OPR with the addition of four more scales : (a) moderate but nonetheless above the mean Altruism, (b) low Practical Outlook, i.e., an interest in broader issues rather than the immediately mundane and practical ; (c) moderate but below the mean Masculinity-Femininity, and a finding not entirely related to actual gender ; and (d) moderate but below the mean Response Bias.

A third sample of a social change movement was assessed by Whittaker and Elias (1976) using the OPI. It was hypothesized that the university students of the Women's Liberation Movement would project the unique "social change" group profile previously identified and, indeed, this was found as significantly contrasted to a comparative sample of female students.

Fourthly, this interesting OPI phenomenon was noted in other data collected at U.B.C. by Whittaker (1985a). In contrast to the large, regular program in teacher preparation, a small, limited enrollment (approx. 40 students), optional, alternative program was offered. This unique Community Education Program was more demanding, specializing in situation specific community school needs and how educators could interact with the neighbourhood, often multicultural, to ameliorate local problems and directly and indirectly affect social change. Students who self-selected to enroll in this program proved to be a very *biased* sample of education students as measured by the OPI. Over the years, five different incoming classes of these particular students were assessed and they each consistently generated the social change profile whereas a comparative group profile of the regular students, who were, of course, in the vast majority, did not project this pattern.

In terms of university students specifically in teacher preparation, Whittaker (1985b), using the OPI in a fifth study, cross-culturally compared student samples in Canada, the continental United States, Hawaii (where sixty percent of the students were of Japanese extraction), and the Philippines. Although the Canadian and Hawaiian profiles appeared somewhat similar and the Philippine least similar to the others, *none* of the group profiles projected the social change pattern. This seems to confirm that, in general, students in teacher education, are not psychologically prone to be motivated to be overtly involved in social change movements and that such professional faculties tend to attract rather tradition-bound students with rather conforming value systems.

Lastly, in the sixth study, a secondary analysis of a large sample of U.S. students who had completed both the OPI and an extensive questionnaire has been done (Whittaker, 1987b). On the basis of a cluster analysis of survey items relating to their senior year subcultural interests, seven significantly distinct orientations were identified—and each generated a distinct OPI mean group profile. One subcultural grouping, Group #5 and labelled the Socio-Political Vanguard, combined an interest in social/political issues with non-conformity and *only* this group displayed the previously identified social change pattern on the OPI. Approximately five percent of the students fell into this group.

In this latter study, which was longitudinal, it was possible to generate the *freshman* mean group profile on the OPI of those who, as seniors, were classified as the Socio-Poli-

tical Vanguard because the instrument had been administered at the beginning and at the end of their four years at university. The freshman mean profile was, already, a recognizably "social change" profile form, suggesting that as freshmen they already had the psychological propensity for social change involvement. By their senior year this group profile had become more pronounced, more extreme, with significant increases in Thinking Introversion, Complexity, Autonomy, Religious Orientation, Impulse Expression and Altruism and decreases in Social Extroversion and Practical Outlook. At this point it is unclear as to whether this change is due to maturation or socialization (or enculturation) or, most likely, some unknown degree of interaction between the two processes. Psychological research does indicate, however, that for many students their value systems are well formed by the time they enter college and that their systems are more "modified," if at all, rather than radically "changed," by their college years and experience.

6. The OPI Social Change Syndrome

It is important to mention that the OPI must be interpreted not just by an appreciation of the score value of each scale as a separate entity but as a total profile "shape" and thus the relative relationship of the scales to each other as an interactive unity. It is this interrelational fact that this unque mean profile, which was consistently found only in these particular social change subgroup and which therefore leads it to be identified and labelled as a "social change syndrome," which is interpretively meaningful and explains and predicts behaviour. The point also needs to be made that those extreme scales, individually, that define the syndrome are in the direction in which persons tend to move, as shown in long-itudinal research, who have increased sophistication due to the interaction of time, experi-ence and education. Thus this syndrome suggests a rather superior, high potential for innovation, type of individual and when such an individual is joined in a critical mass of similar others it can be a formidable, often altruistic, force to challenge established mores and policies.

These very homogeneous within-groups and between-groups research findings on the five different subgroups, each having in common a strong antithesis to particular aspects of the conventional, traditional mores of the status quo and a propensity to take some form of decisive action to accommodate their desire for change, validate a uniquely specific OPI profile that seemingly is derectly related to the psychological motivation for social change, namely : (a) a strong interest in and openness to novel, diverse ideas and ex-periences concomitant with a tolerance of ambiguity ; (b) a courageously and highly in-dependent, non-conventional, non-authoritarian attitude ; (c) a general readiness directly to express and act on their impulses ; (d) and an interest in broader issues rather than limited to the immediate, ordinary and practical.

7. Social Change and Higher Education

The social change syndrome can be viewed as an important factor in socio-psychological research and as a methodology with considerable ethical implications if misused. The findings point to the inherent ramifications of the fundamentally central issue of the individu-

al and society and that the relationship is basically founded on belief systems that are of varying degrees of compatibility. Higher education often is the intermediary, the go-between, in this interaction and is often pulled both ways at once. All university campuses have faced this dilemma and , as in the Republic of Korea, it is interesting to observe how change and reform is evolving (Koo, 1988). These ramifications are unavoidable but challenging. They relate, as does the notion of a social change syndrome, to consideration of the value systems of soiety, in general, and indiveduals, in particulcular, as a force for the status quo or social change and the recruitment of individuals and/or ideas for their innovativeness and thus the utilization of this potential influence on the future direction of paritcular social systems and, in the final analysis, of society.

In this respect, Whittaker(1987c) stresses another responsibility of higher education and its future impact, internationalism and the foreign student, and the belief that one of the most important personality characteristics of the foreign student, ideally, would be a propensity similar to the social change syndrome. Such a person would be a propensity similar to the social change syndrome. Such a person would be open to new experiences and ideas—one of the fundamental purposes of a foreign education is such an exposure and such an open outlook would ameliorate the adjustment to cultural shock—and would be so motivated that certain new ideas learned would be selectively applied on return home within the framework of local traditions. Thus the advancement of social change, no matter at what level, might be initiated from "what is" to "what ought to matter at what to be."

8. Concluding Remarks

Aldous Huxley (1961) in his essay on human potentialities asks that very simple and seemingly absurd question : What are people for ? As an act of faith and concerned with human decency and liberty, he believes "that man is here for the purpose of realizing as much as possible of his desirable potentialities within a stable but elastic society"(p. 60). We in higher education can agree with this ideal statement. But a particular person's "desire" may not be desired by certain other members of that same society but if society is "elastic" enough perhaps it could some- how be accommodated. And if not ? Inner tension ? Overt action ?

There is the distressing fact that Huxley alludes to that aggressive feelings can pay higher psychological dividends than gentler feelings. "They provide a greater kick" (p. 73). Social change and social conflict thus, seemingly, is prone to go hand in hand. The social change syndrome is psychologically prone to elements of overt action as indicated by the extreme need to express impulses. Can society, can higger education as a part of society, accommodate change ? To the extent that they can is, surely, some measure of our democratic view of life. Hopefully societies can make such accommodations and compromises and be "elastic." This is a fundamental challenge to all of us in higher education.

Jacoby(1988) has recently warned North American academics of a portent that he senses : the university is in danger of becoming the kiss of death for a crusading spirit. If we educators do not, will not, cannot encourage and accommodate innovation, with all its often accompanying disruption and distasteful readjustment to some, this inability will

inevitably lead to stagnant conditions on and off the campus. This apathy, too, is a challenge to higher education.

It is said that Youth must be served. It is our responsibility in higher education to recharge our dedication to encourage all to realize their potentialities and to encourage, especially, somehow, those youth who have that rare, special, innovative spirit. Psychologically, in terms of this paper, this temperamental proclivity is scientifically labelled as "the OPI social change syndrome" but it just as easily might be labelled the "sinp aram," or "spiritual wind," that, according to the native Korean shamanism can be a major source of vitality. Whatever it is called, wherever it comes from, wherever it is found, it is the gift of the human potential.

The 21st century will be in the hands of today's youth. I hope we can hand it over to them having shown them, as a model to emulate, a world that, if not both stable and elastic, is at least moving in that direction. Perhaps our conference can contribute to this goal in some small way, and I am sure we all anticipate having an interesting, useful, and successful meeting together. Thank you very much.

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